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Cover photo: Scuba diving in Alaska can be a change for divers used to clear tropical seas. Alaska divers typically wear insulated gloves, hoods, and water-tight drysuits to avoid hypothermia from exposure to cold waters. Visibility can also be marginal in some settings, especially at shallow depth and during summer when the abundance of daylight and nutrients combine to produce colorful blooms of phytoplankton (microscopic algae) and zooplankton (minute marine animals). Plankton forms the base of the food chain that supports Alaska's abundant marine fish, seabirds, whales, and other marine wildlife.

NOAA Maritime Heritage Program photograph by Tane Casserley



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Harbor seals on ice.

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